

# Community Eligibility Provision: Improving Direct Certification Systems

January 27, 2016

## Today's Presenters:

- Kevin Maskornick, *Program Analyst, USDA-FNS*
- Joe Templin, *Program Analyst, USDA-FNS*

# Goals for Today's Webinar

- Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) overview.
- Direct certification basics.
- Outline the role of direct certification in CEP.
- Share best practices for improving direct certification systems.
- Questions and answers.





# COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY BASICS

# What is CEP?

- Allows high-poverty schools to serve free meals to all enrolled students for up to four consecutive school years.
- Individual schools, groups of schools, or entire school districts may elect CEP.
- SY 2014-2015 was first year of nationwide availability.





# A Vital Opportunity to Combat Child Hunger in Your Community!



- CEP simplifies the process by which low-income children access healthy school meals.
- Nearly 16 million American children live in households that struggle to put food on the table; CEP can extend a vital lifeline to members of your school community who are in need!

# What Makes CEP Different?

- Student eligibility for free meals not determined on individual basis.
- Eliminates the need to collect household applications; relies on direct certification process and other means of certifying students.
- SNAP, TANF, FDPIR, or based on status as migrant youth, homeless, foster child, or Head Start.



# CEP Benefits Everyone!



## Students:

- Enjoy free, healthy meals at school.
- With all meals served at no charge, there is no stigma attached to a free meal.

## Families:

- Do not have to fill out household applications.
- Do not have to worry about refilling meal accounts, or whether their child has an opportunity to eat at school.



## Schools:

- Reduces paperwork and administrative costs.
- Streamlines the meal service operation.
- Less time waiting in lines and more time eating means students are less likely to discard food and more likely to come to class better nourished and ready to learn.

# Eligibility for CEP

- **Schools, groups of schools, or districts must:**
  - Have an identified student percentage (ISP) of at least 40% as of April 1st of the school year prior to implementing CEP.
  - Participate in or agree to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP).
  - Have a record of administering the Programs in accordance with regulations.

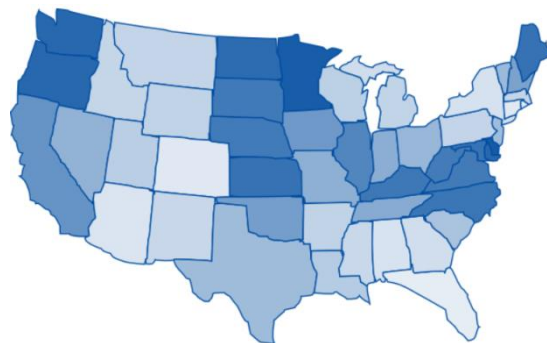


In SY 2015-2016,  
CEP is reaching:



Over 17,000 schools  
and 3000 districts.

8.1 million children.



All 50 States,  
D.C., and Guam.



# **DIRECT CERTIFICATION AND COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY**

**Direct certification** is a process conducted by the States and local educational agencies (LEAs) to establish school meal benefits for children without the need for household applications.

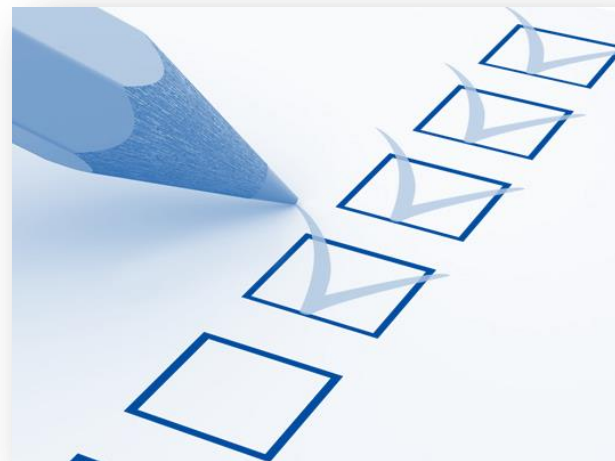
# Types of Direct Certification

## Categorically Eligible Federal Programs

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
- Medicaid (when participants meet 133% of the Federal poverty level, designated pilot states only)

## Other Source Categorical Eligibility

- Head Start and Early Head Start
- Homeless children
- Migrant children
- Foster children



# Benefits of Direct Certification

- Automatic free meal enrollment for many low-income children.
- Reduced paperwork burden for schools.
- Improved accuracy.
- Improved financial viability of CEP.





# Direct Certification and CEP

- The number of directly certified students makes up the **identified student population**.
- The identified student number multiplied by 1.6 determines the school's **identified student percentage** (ISP).
- The ISP is used to calculate the school's free and paid meal **reimbursement rates**.

Schools with higher ISPs receive the full reimbursement for a greater percentage of their meals.

**Direct certification is a key factor in financial viability of CEP!**



# **DIRECT CERTIFICATION IMPROVEMENT**

# The Direct Certification Process

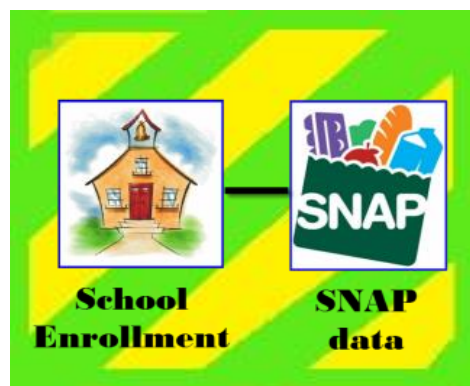
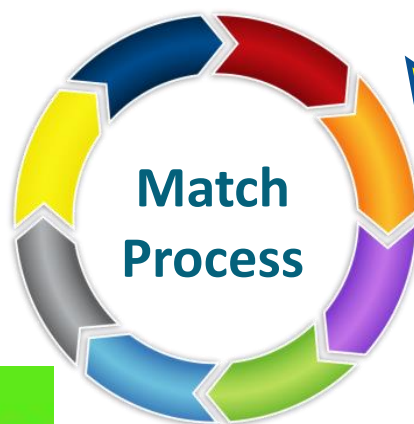
School Enrollment Data



SNAP Participation Data



Source Data



Match Results

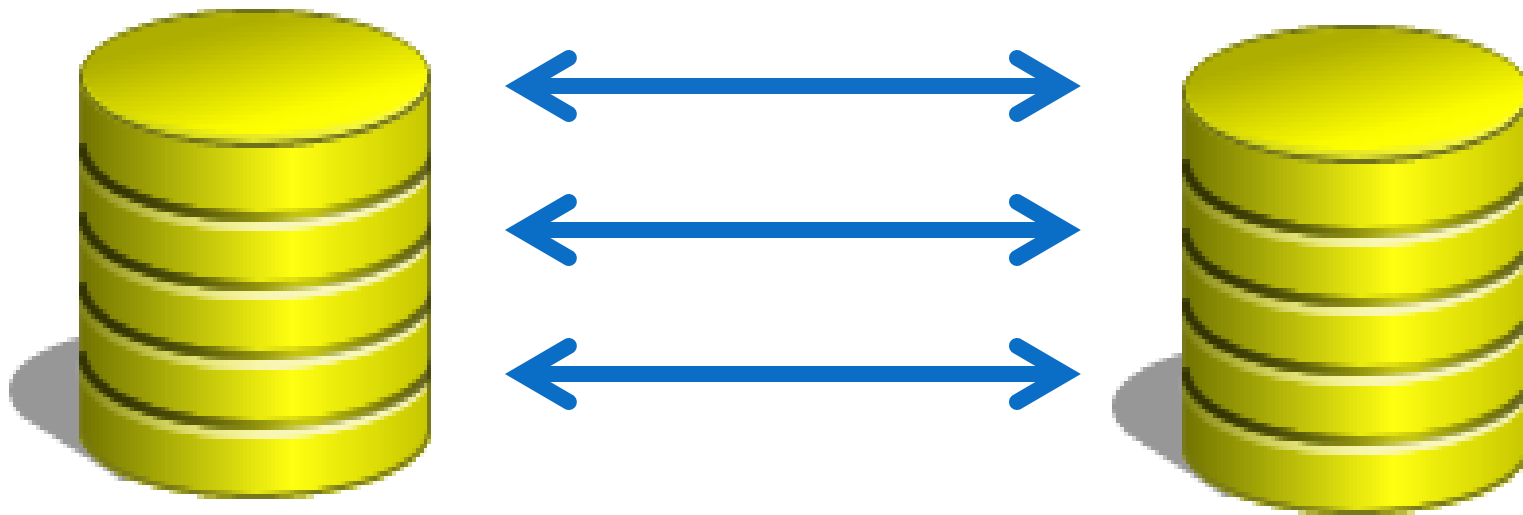
Use Match Results to  
directly certify at  
local level

SNAP  
DC

•

# Student Data

# SNAP Data





*The DC process depends on matching data –attributes  
of a real-world child – provided in electric form.*

**WILLIAMS**

**151 W. OAK ST.**

**ROBERT SIMPSON**

**6TH**

**ANGELA**

**02-04-2004**

**60604**

**LINCOLN ELEMENTARY**

# Complete Student Data Files

- Unique student ID.
- Timely SIS updates.
- Maintain SIS schedules.
- Alternative matching option: district-wide matching.



# Improved SNAP Data

- Increased age range.
- Additional data fields.
- Revise MOU.



# Timely SNAP Data

- Daily SNAP files.
- Supplemental files: Allow time for full cycle.



# Compiled SNAP Data List

- Compiled lists vs. snapshot.
- Prevent “lost” matches.
- Insurance against human error.





# Matching Process Overview

First Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Guardian First Name	Zip Code
James	Mason	10/03/1996	Mary	01234
James	Mason	10/03/1996	Mary	01234

Exact  
Match

First Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Guardian First Name	Zip Code
James	Mason	10/03/1996	Mary	01234
James	Mason	03/10/1996	Mary	12340

Similar  
Match

# Examples of Matching Common Errors

Hyphenated Last Name	Pseudonym	Names with Multiple Spellings	Flipped First and Last Names	Flipped Date of Birth
Smith-Jones	Robert	John	Doe Jane	06/07/1994 DD/MM/YY (July 6, 1994)
Smith Jones SmithJones Jones Smith Jones-Smith	Bobby Bob Bobbie Robbie Robby Rob	Jon Jean Johnn Jonn	Jane Doe	07/06/1994 MM/DD/YY

# Work To Overcome Matching Issues

- Errors in names.
- Errors in birthdates.
- Increase matching attributes.
- False negatives (Recall).
- False positives (Precision).



# Potential/Unmatched List

- Use probability scoring to prioritize most likely matches.
- Require confirmation of accept/decline.
- Single student look-up with use of SNAP Case Number.
- Focus group on-screen format and results.



# Expand Your Matching Universe

Homeless

**SNAP**

FOSTER CARE

Head Start

**FDPIR**

MIGRANT

**TANF**





# Make Matching Seamless

- Utilize the same process for matching on all data uniform whenever possible.
- Combined files.



# Areas of Monitoring

- Portal & DC module.
- LEA-level process.
- Source data.
- Reporting.



## Communicate with LEA Partners:

*Understand how your LEAs  
use the system, and know if  
what you think, is true.*

# Nevada: Promising Practices

- Nevada Department of Agriculture (11 Tribes) and Duck Valley Shoshone-Paiute Tribe.
- Monthly AIS-generated data files posted to secure location for school district matching.
- 8 school districts and 2 BIE schools covering 8 counties.



# Nevada: Promising Practices

## RESULTS:

162 additional children  
directly certified in  
School Year 2014-2015!!



# Oklahoma: Promising Practices

- Shawnee Public Schools (Shawnee, OK) and Sac & Fox Nation.
- AIS-generated data files provided in September, December, and March.
- Primary and Secondary attributes matched by SPS via Excel.



# Oklahoma: Promising Practices

## RESULTS:

40 additional children  
directly certified in  
School Year 2014-2015!!

# Resources

- **USDA-FNS CEP Website & Resource Center:**

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/community-eligibility-provision>

- **Direct Certification in the National School Lunch Program - Report to Congress:**

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/direct-certification-national-school-lunch-program-report-congress-state-implementation-progress>

- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities - Improving Direct Certification:**

<http://www.cbpp.org/research/improving-direct-certification-will-help-more-low-income-children-receive-school-meals>

- **Direct Certification Improvement Grants:**

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/2015-direct-certification-improvement-grants>

# Questions?

**Please Join Our Upcoming CEP Webinars:**

**February 3<sup>rd</sup>** – Notification and Publication Requirements

**February 10<sup>th</sup>** – CEP Messaging and Outreach in Your Community

**February 24<sup>th</sup>** – Making “Cents” of CEP at 40-50% ISP